UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/974
15 September 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 14 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-second regular session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 10 and 11 September 1999 (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-second session, held in Jeddah on 10 and 11 September 1999

On 10 and 11 September 1999 the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its seventy-second regular session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Mr. Sulayman Majid al-Shahin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Mr. Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council offered the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, its most heartfelt condolences on the death of His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz, Director-General of Youth Welfare, may the Lord protect him with His infinite grace and grant him favour.

The Ministerial Council reviewed progress made in cooperation and developments with respect to the regional, pan-Arab and international political and security issues of concern to GCC member States.

Progress made in cooperation

Economic matters

The Council considered the progress made in joint economic action by member States as reflected in the documentation of the ministerial committees and the relevant reports submitted to it.

The Council was informed of the steps taken at the fiftieth meeting of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation, held in Riyadh in May 1999, with regard to the establishment of a GCC customs union. It expressed

satisfaction at the completion of the classification of all goods for the purpose of establishing a standard customs tariff for member States vis-à-vis the rest of the world and at the harmonization of views that had taken place concerning the proposed tariff rates for the two categories "basic goods" and "other goods". The Council approved the Committee's recommendation that national ownership, stipulated in the Unified Economic Agreement as a prerequisite if industrial products were to acquire the status of products of national origin, should no longer be required, and it decided to submit the recommendation to the Supreme Council for endorsement.

The Council was also informed that, at its twentieth and twenty-first meetings, held in May and June 1999 respectively, the Committee for Cooperation in regard to Electricity and Water had approved the articles of incorporation and statute of the Electricity Grid Interlinkage Authority, to be based in Saudi Arabia, and had launched it as a joint-stock company preparatory to the implementation of the first phase of the project.

The Council took note of the recommendations adopted by the Ministerial Posts and Communications Committee at its twenty-first meeting, held in February 1999, including the recommendation to lower mutual settlement rates among member States as a preliminary step towards reducing charges for telephone calls between them.

It also took note of the decisions and recommendations concerning the augmented activities of the Scientific and Technical Cooperation Committee and the Committee of Heads of GCC Statistical Organizations and on the uniform scheduling of general censuses in member States, as reflected in the record of the eighth meeting of the Planning and Development Committee.

The Council heard a report on the progress of negotiations with the European Commission on the conclusion of a free-trade agreement between the GCC States and the States members of the European Union. It approved the request of Bahrain to be allocated the post of GCC Chief of Mission in Brussels as of 2002.

The Council also heard a report on the negotiations on a Declaration of Principles on cooperation between the GCC States and the States members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). It approved the draft of the Declaration submitted to it.

The Council reviewed the current situation in the petroleum market and expressed satisfaction at the improved price levels and at continued compliance with the agreement recently reached between the OPEC countries and the non-OPEC countries, which had helped to promote the interests of producers and consumers alike.

Military matters

The Council heard a report on the outcome of the meetings held on coordination and cooperation in military matters and expressed satisfaction at the progress made.

Man and the environment

The Council was informed of a number of follow-up reports on the environment, health, education, culture, youth and sports, and it expressed satisfaction at the progress made in cooperation in these areas. It affirmed the support of member States for the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for West Asia remaining in Bahrain permanently.

Legal matters and judicial cooperation

The Council reviewed the agreements reached by the Ministers of Justice of the GCC States at their tenth meeting, held in Kuwait, concerning the promotion and consolidation of judicial cooperation among member States and expressed its satisfaction therewith.

Political issues

Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions resulting from its aggression against Kuwait. It noted that, after more than nine years, Iraq was still temporizing on compliance with fundamental aspects of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It again expressed regret that the Iraqi regime was continuing to defy resolutions that had the force of international law and to reject the initiatives taken and proposals made at the inter-Arab and international levels for the creation of an effective mechanism and a workable procedure, within the framework of the United Nations, for the lifting of the international economic embargo being maintained against Iraq and for ending the suffering of the Iraqi people.

In this context, the Council reaffirmed its call to the Iraqi Government to respond swiftly to inter-Arab and international appeals to the effect that there must be compliance with all Security Council resolutions. It urged Iraq to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the implementation of the relevant resolutions, specifically those concerning genuine cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross for the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages, the return of Kuwaiti property, and an undertaking to refrain from any act of provocation or aggression against Kuwait and neighbouring States, as required by Security Council resolution 949 (1994), in order to promote security and stability in the region.

The Council reaffirmed that Iraq had still to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards its neighbours by word and deed and to acknowledge that its invasion of Kuwait had been a violation of the relevant pan-Arab and international covenants, such as the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League and the Charter of the United Nations.

Recalling the well-established positions taken by the GCC member States and given their responsibilities at the regional, pan-Arab and international levels, the Council again expressed genuine empathy and fellow feeling for the fraternal Iraqi people in the suffering it was enduring because of its Government's policies and intransigence. It affirmed its determination to pursue its efforts with a view to ending the plight of the long-suffering Iraqi people, and it stressed the need to preserve the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Relations with Iran

The Council reviewed the work of the Committee of Three entrusted with the task of preparing the way for direct negotiations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the question of the islands. The Committee requested the Council's approval for it to continue the efforts it had begun to prepare a suitable climate for direct negotiations between the two countries.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council considered developments in the peace process in the Middle East. The Council welcomes the agreement reached between the Palestinian and Israeli sides on 4 September 1999 at the Sharm al-Shaykh resort in Egypt, and it expresses the hope that this agreement will be coupled with honest intentions and will meet with full and meticulous implementation on the part of the Israeli Government.

The Council expressed its conviction that the peace process in the Middle East could be carried through to completion only by the restoration of legitimate Arab rights in implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principles of the Madrid Conference and the principle of land for peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and by the Palestinian people's attainment of all its legitimate national rights, including the right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council affirmed its full support for Syria in its demand for the resumption of negotiations from the point at which they were suspended, for recognition of its legitimate right to the return of the occupied Syrian Golan heights and for the withdrawal of Israel to the boundary lines of 4 June 1967 and from southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), without restrictions or conditions.

The Council appreciates the pan-Arab and international efforts made to facilitate the conclusion of the Sharm al-Shaykh Memorandum by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. It calls upon the co-sponsors of the peace process, particularly the United States of America, and on the European Union and its member States to continue and to intensify their efforts as active partners in the peace process and to endeavour to revive the negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council once more called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council again affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Council considered the consequences of the devastating earthquake in Turkey. It offered its sincere condolences and expressed its sympathy with Turkey and its people for the victims of the earthquake, which had left large numbers of dead and injured, beseeching Almighty God to instill their kith and kin with fortitude and grant them solace. To help mitigate the consequences of this devastating earthquake and further to the immediate assistance they hastened to provide to Turkey, and in appreciation of the historical relations and cultural and religious ties that bind them, the GCC member States have decided to contribute to a funding programme a sum in the order of 400 million United States dollars to be channelled for the financing of reconstruction and development projects in the areas affected by the earthquake. In order to complete this task, a joint technical mission from the GCC member States will shortly visit Turkey to identify the projects to be financed in agreement with the authorities concerned.

The Council reviewed events in the islands of East Timor and considered the pressures being brought to bear on Indonesia despite its acceptance of the outcome of the elections and its endeavour to give effect to that outcome by calming the situation and bringing it under control. The Council expressed the hope that the international community would support the Indonesian Government in order to facilitate its efforts to restore security and stability to the area.